

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR VN US

SUBJ: US-VN RELATIONS: PRELIMINARY MEETING IN PARIS,
MARCH 8 -- FLASH SUMMARY REPORT

1. PRELIMINARY MEETING BETWEEN US AND VN SIDES TOOK
PLACE AS SCHEDULED. MEETING WENT WELL, WITH
CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES RAISED BUT RELATIVELY MUTED.
MUCH OF MEETING WAS DEVOTED TO READING OF PREPARED
STATEMENTS BY BOTH SIDES AND LOGISTIC AND ADMINISTRA-
TIVE DETAILS OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION'S FORTHCOMING
VISIT TO HANOI. VIETNAMESE ASSURED THAT COMMISSION

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WOULD RECEIVE AN EXCELLENT WELCOME AND THAT ALL
NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE MADE WITHIN TECHNICAL
FACILITIES AVAILABLE.

2. MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND AGENDA
FOR COMMISSION'S TALKS IN HANOI. VIETNAMESE ASKED
WHETHER COMMISSION WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS QUESTION

OF US AID TO VIETNAM AS A MATTER OF VIETNAMESE CONCERN TO MATCH VIETNAMESE PROMISE TO DISCUSS MIAS AS MATTER OF PRIMARY US CONCERN. US SIDE INDICATED FROM PREPARED STATEMENTS THAT COMMISSION'S PRIMARY PURPOSE WAS TO OBTAIN MIA INFORMATION AND RETURN OF REMAINS, TO LISTEN TO WHAT VIETNAMESE HAD TO SAY ON ANY ISSUES THEY WISHED TO RAISE, AND TO REPORT VIETNAMESE VIEWS BACK TO THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS CONSIDERATION. VIETNAMESE FINALLY PROPOSED THAT COMMISSION DISCUSS SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA IN MORE DETAIL ON ARRIVAL IN HANOI.

3. VIETNAMESE DID REITERATE FORMULATION IN FONMIN TRINH LETTER FEB. 21 AND VNA BROADCAST MARCH 3 THAT US SHOULD BE PREPARED TO EXAMINE AND SOLVE WITH GOOD WILL THEIR PRIMARY CONCERN RE AID. THEY INDICATED THAT IF THERE IS NOT A DESIRE BY EACH SIDE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE OTHER SIDE, GOOD INTENTIONS WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT.

4. OTHER MAIN SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION WAS THE ISSUE OF THE COMMISSION'S MANDATE. VIETNAMESE ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD BE EMPOWERED TO NEGOTIATE, TO SIGN AGREEMENTS, ETC. US REPS REPLIED FROM PREPARED GUIDANCE TO INDICATE EXACT SCOPE OF COMMISSION'S MISSION. AFTER SEVERAL EXCHANGES, VIETNAMESE APPEARED TO UNDERSTAND CLEARLY WHAT THIS WILL BE.

5. VIETNAMESE PROVIDED NAMES OF OFFICIALS WHO WILL DEAL WITH COMMISSION IN HANOI (LED BY PHAN HIEN,
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DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER), PROMISED TO LOOK INTO PROBLEM OF AIRCRAFT LANDING CAPABILITY, ASKED WHETHER COMMISSION WOULD WANT PRESS CONFERENCES IN HANOI, OFFERED TO TRANSMIT CYPHER MATERIAL FOR COMMISSION DURING STAY VIA COMMERCIAL MEANS, AND GENERALLY WERE VERY FORTHCOMING ON ARRANGEMENTS TO ASSURE GOOD RECEPTION FOR COMMISSION.

6. US REPS RAISED INFORMALLY THE MATTER OF US PRESS COVERING THE COMMISSION'S VISIT IN HANOI. VIETNAMESE REPLIED THAT SOME JOURNALISTS HAD ALREADY APPROACHED THEM HERE. THEY DESCRIBED THEIR LACK OF FACILITIES TO ACCOMMODATE LARGE NUMBERS OF PRESS BUT WOULD BE WILLING TO PROPOSE TO HANOI THAT FOUR OR FIVE US NEWSMEN, WHOSE NAMES MIGHT BE COMMUNICATED TO THEM BY THE USG, BE PERMITTED TO GO TO HANOI TO COVER THE EVENT.
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